

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 EB-11 AID-20 IGA-02 ACDA-19 IO-14 SAJ-01 MC-02

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DRAFTED BY AF/E:R.V.KEELEY:BJR

APPROVED BY DEPUY SECRETARY

AF - MR. EASUM

S/S - MR. MILLER

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 086716

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, ET, US, SO

SUBJECT: AMB. KIFLE'S MEETING WITH THE DEPUTY SECRETARY RE

IEG MILITARY AID REQUEST

REF: STATE 82056

SUMMARY: FORMER AMBASSADOR KIFLE CALLED ON DEPUTY SECRETARY APRIL 24. IN SAME TERMS HE HAD USED EARLIER WITH ASST. SEC. EASUM (REFTEL) KIFLE ASSERTED IEG HAS "IRREFUTABLE EVIDENCE" SOMALIA HAS DECIDED TO LAUNCH AN ATTACK AND ONLY QUESTION REMAINING IS WHEN. HE PRESSED IEG'S URGENT REQUEST FOR LARGE QUANTITY OF DEFENSIVE WEAPONS TO HELP MEET SUCH AN ATTACK. KIFLE LEFT AIDE-MEMOIRE WITH DEP. SEC. WHICH LISTED DOLS 138 MILLION WORTH OF ARMS IEG

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WOULD LIKE TO OBTAIN FROM USG THROUGH GRANTS, CREDITS OR CASH PURCHASES. DEP. SEC. RESPONDED TO APPEAL BY SAYING IT WOULD RECEIVE CLOSEST ATTENTION OF USG AT HIGHEST LEVELS.

END SUMMARY.

1. KIFLE BEGAN BY REFERRING TO DEP. SEC.'S MEETING WITH THE EMPEROR LAST MAY IN WHICH HIM EMPHASIZED GROWING SOVIET THREAT IN AREA OF HORN AND DANGER THIS POSED TO AREA'S PEACE AND SECURITY. KIFLE SAID US SIDE HAD SHARED IEG'S CONCERN BUT HAD NOT VIEWED IT AS SERIOUSLY AS HAD IEG. US SIDE WAS SYMPATHETIC, GAVE IEG CONCERNS SERIOUS ATTENTION AND SUBSEQUENTLY MADE SOME ADDITIONS TO MAP, BUT THESE HAD NOT GONE VERY FAR TOWARD MEETING IEG'S REQUIREMENTS.

2. THINGS HAVE CHANGED DRAMATICALLY SINCE LAST YEAR, KIFLE SAID, AND IEG NOW HAS "IRREFUTABLE EVIDENCE" THAT SOMALIA HAS DECIDED TO ATTACK ETHIOPIA. RECENT EVENTS IN ETHIOPIA HAVE INFLUENCED GSDR DECISION. THERE ARE TWO FACTIONS IN GSDR LEADERSHIP, BUT THEY DISAGREE ONLY ON QUESTION OF TIMING OF ATTACK. IF POLITICAL UNREST CONTINUES IN ETHIOPIA, KIFLE SAID, IT COULD ENCOURAGE SOMALIA TO MOUNT ATTACK. ON OTHER HAND, IF SITUATION INSIDE ETHIOPIA CONSOLIDATES, THAT TOO MIGHT CAUSE SOMALIA TO ATTACK BEFORE ETHIOPIA REGAINED ITS STRENGTH. A SOMALI ATTACK IS ALMOST A CERTAINTY, KIFLE SAID.

3. OTHER FACTORS IN SITUATION ARE OUTCOME OF OCTOBER WAR IN MIDDLE EAST, AND OIL CRISIS WHICH HAS INCREASED WEALTH AND POWER OF ARAB WORLD, THUS ENCOURAGING SOMALIA TO THROW IN ITS LOT WITH ARABS. SOMALIA HAS NOW JOINED ARAB LEAGUE AND CAN ANTICIPATE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THAT QUARTER. SOMALIA CAN NOW ASK FOR ARAB MILITARY SUPPORT AS WELL. BUT BASICALLY, KIFLE SAID, SOMALIA'S DECISION TO ATTACK ETHIOPIA HAS BEEN BASEDON ITS AWARENESS OF ITS "OVERWHELMING SUPERIORITY" IN ALL CATEGORIES OF WEAPONS.

4. ACCORDING TO KIFLE'S PRESENTATION, ETHIOPIA'S FORCES LACK BOTH DEFENSIVE AND OFFENSIVE CAPABILITIES VIS-A-VIS
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SOMALIA. THEY HAVE NO EARLY WARNING RADAR SYSTEM, WHILE SOMALIA HAS SEVEN RADAR SYSTEMS COVERING THE COUNTRY. SOMALIA HAS NOW INSTALLED SAM-2 MISSILE AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM. IEG LACKS AN OFFENSIVE CAPABILITY WHICH COULD DETER SOMALIA FROM ATTACKING. IEG, WISHING TO REDRESS MILITARY BALANCE, IS ASKING USG TO HELP IT OBTAIN DEFENSIVE EQUIPMENT NEEDED TO MINIMIZE EFFECTS OF A SOMALI "FIRST STRIKE." IEG IS ASKING FOR MAINLY DEFENSIVE WEAPONS: RADAR, ANTI-AIRCRAFT, ANTI-TANK WEAPONS.

5. KIFLE SAID IEG REALIZES A REQUEST FOR OFFENSIVE

WEAPONS MIGHT CAUSE THE USG POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES. IEG IS ALSO AWARE THAT PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES ARE AGAINST MILITARY AID. BUT IEG HAS DEPENDED ON US FOR MILITARY SUPPORT, EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING FOR 25 YEARS. TO LOOK TO OTHER SOURCES WOULD BE IMPRACTICAL NOW. ANOTHER PROBLEM FACED BY IEG TODAY IS THAT IF ITS FORCES MET REVERSES IN THE FIELD THERE WOULD BE A CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT IN ETHIOPIA THAT COULD CHANGE THE POLITICAL OUTLOOK OF THE COUNTRY.

6. ETHIOPIA AND US HAVE ALWAYS COUNTED ON EACH OTHER'S FRIENDSHIP, KIFLE SAID. IF US FAILED TO HELP IEG STRENGTHEN ITS DEFENSES NOW THERE WOULD DEVELOP A RESENTMENT AGAINST THE US IN ETHIOPIA. THERE WOULD ALSO BE REPERCUSSIONS ON ETHIOPIA'S NEIGHBORS AND THE REST OF AFRICA. IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNTRIES LIKE SUDAN, WITH WHICH US IS TRYING TO BUILD A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP, WOULD BE QUITE SERIOUS. THERE WOULD BE ADDITIONAL IMPLICATIONS FOR US INTERESTS IN INDIAN OCEAN AND RED SEA. IEG HAS NOW DECIDED TO "STOP" ITS DEVELOPMENT EFFORT, IF NECESSARY, AND USE ITS LIMITED AVAILABLE RESOURCES TO ACQUIRE THOSE WEAPONS IT NEEDS. SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH IEG VIEWS THREAT IT FACES IS INDICATED BY ITS WILLINGNESS TO PURCHASE FOR CASH WHATEVER USG IS UNABLE TO PROVIDE THROUGH GRANTS OR CREDITS.

7. DEPUTY SECRETARY RESPONDED THAT KIFLE HAD PAINTED A GRAVE PICTURE. WE ARE COMMITTED TO SECURITY OF ETHIOPIA AND TO MAINTENANCE OF PEACE IN AREA, HE SAID. DEP. SEC. ALSO REFERRED TO LONG-STANDING ETHIOPIAN-US FRIENDSHIP
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AND PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP OF HIM AND PRESIDENT NIXON. DEP. SEC. STATED THAT US INTELLIGENCE DOES NOT INDICATE ANY INTENTION BY SOVIET UNION TO DISTURB PEACE IN AREA OF HORN. HE PROMISED KIFLE THAT USG WOULD GIVE IEG REQUEST CLOSEST ATTENTION AT HIGHEST LEVELS.

ASSESSMENTS OF DEGREE OF THREAT TO ETHIOPIA'S SECURITY DIFFER. ALSO, THE SOMALIS HAD ASSURED DEP. SEC. PERSONALLY AND OTHER USG OFFICIALS OF THEIR INTENTION TO PURSUE THEIR CLAIMS WITH PEACEFUL METHODS ONLY AND OF THEIR DEVOTION TO PEACE. USG BELIEVES THAT ARABS AND SOVIETS BOTH WANT PEACE IN AREA OF HORN.

8. KIFLE THANKED DEP. SEC. FOR HIS REMARKS. NO DOUBT SOMALIA WOULD GIVE THE US THESE ASSURANCES, HE SAID, BUT HOW IS IT THAT SUCH A POOR COUNTRY HAD BEEN ABLE TO ESTABLISH A MILITARY POSTURE GOING WAY BEYOND ITS LEGITIMATE DEFENSE NEEDS? THEY MUST HAVE A POLITICAL OBJECTIVE OR THEY WOULD NOT HAVE DECIDED TO SPEND SO

MUCH MONEY FOR ARMS, KIFLE ASSERTED. IEG HAD TRIED TO ENGAGE THE GSDR IN TALKS ON MUTUAL COOPERATION AND HAD NOT ASKED SOMALIA TO RENOUNCE ITS TERRITORIAL CLAIMS AS A PRECONDITION, BUT GSDR HAD NOT RESPONDED.

9. DEP. SEC. INQUIRED AS TO WHAT EVIDENCE IEG HAD THAT SOMALIA INTENDED TO ATTACK IT, ASIDE FROM LOGICAL POINT THAT SOMALIA MIGHT WISH TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF CURRENT ETHIOPIAN DISARRAY? WHAT WAS THE "IRREFUTABLE

EVIDENCE" THE AMBASSADOR HAD MENTIONED? KIFLE REPLIED THAT IEG HAD TRANSCRIPTS OF DEBATES WITHIN GSDR'S LEADERSHIP (KIFLE'S IMPLICATION WAS THAT THESE DEBATES CONCERNED QUESTION OF ATTACKING ETHIOPIA), AND THERE HAD BEEN PROBES INTO OGADEN BY SOMALI FORCES, AS WELL AS RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS OVER ETHIOPIAN TERRITORY. KIFLE SAID THIS INTELLIGENCE HAD BEEN SHARED WITH "YOUR PEOPLE" IN ADDIS.

10. ASST. SEC. EASUM ASKED IF IEG EXPECTED SOMALIA WOULD ATTACK WITH TANKS, WITH MIG'S, OR WOULD THEY BE MORE LIKELY TO UNLEASH GUERRILLAS IN OGADEN? KIFLE SAID
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SOMALIA KNOWS IT HAS SUPERIORITY IN BOTH TANKS AND AIR POWER, SO EITHER WOULD BE POSSIBLE. SURPRISE ATTACK WOULD NOT BE NECESSARY, FOR SOMALIA KNOWS THAT ETHIOPIA LACKS AN EARLY WARNING SYSTEM. DEP. SEC. INQUIRED HOW IMMINENT IEG BELIEVED ATTACK TO BE. KIFLE SAID GSDR LEADERSHIP IS DIVIDED BUT THOSE ADVOCATING A DELAY ARE IN MAJORITY AT PRESENT. DEP. SEC. POSED QUESTION REGARDING HYPOTHETICAL EFFECT OF SUDDEN DELIVERY OF QUANTITIES OF US MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO ETHIOPIAN SIDE. WOULDNT THIS ENCOURAGE SOMALIS TO LAUNCH AN ATTACK BEFORE ETHIOPIAN FORCES COULD DEPLOY NEW EQUIPMENT? KIFLE AGREED THAT THIS DANGER EXISTED, BUT SAID IT WAS THE LESSER OF POSSIBLE DANGERS. WEAPONS IN QUESTION WERE ALL DEFENSIVE. THEY COULD BE DELIVERED QUICKLY AND SECRETLY. DEP. SEC. DOUBTED SECRECY WAS POSSIBLE. KIFLE SAID IEG FORCES COULD EMPLOY NEW EQUIPMENT SPEEDILY SINCE GREAT DEAL OF TRAINING WOULD NOT BE REQUIRED. IEG FORCES ARE USED TO AMERICAN EQUIPMENT. KIFLE ADMITTED MISSILES AND RADARS WOULD NECESSITATE TRAINING.

11. DEP. SEC. STATED THAT USG TALKS TO SOVIETS ABOUT AVOIDING ARMS RACES AND OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES ANYWHERE. WE WOULD HAVE TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT POSSIBLE SOVIET REACTION TO OUR POURING ARMS INTO AN AREA WITH POTENTIAL CONFLICT. WE WISH TO AVOID CONFRONTATIONS WITH SOVIETS IN AN AREA SUCH AS THE HORN WHICH MIGHT ARISE FROM OUR SUPPLYING ARMS TO ETHIOPIA AND SOVIETS GIVING ARMS

TO SOMALIS. KIFLE RESPONDED THAT IEG HAS TALKED TO SOVIETS ABOUT SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS THEY HAVE GIVEN TO SOMALIA WHICH THREATEN ETHIOPIAN SECURITY. SOVIET RESPONSE HAS BEEN TO "PROD" IEG ABOUT DISPLAYING A FRIENDLIER ATTITUDE TOWARD THEM. SOVIETS WISH TO USE SUPPLY OF WEAPONS AS LEVERAGE TO INCREASE THEIR INFLUENCE IN SOMALIA, ETHIOPIA AND KENYA. KIFLE SAID IEG HAS DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING SOME OF US OBJECTIVES AND US REACTIONS TO SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN AREA OF HORN. US

PRESS NEVER SEEMS TO DISCUSS SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN SOMALIA.

12. DEP. SEC. STATED THAT US IS NOT INDIFFERENT TO SPREAD
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OF SOVIET INFLUENCE IN AFRICA, BUT WE CANNOT FORCE THEM OUT OF SOMALIA. OUR OBJECTIVES ARE PEACE, DEVELOPMENT AND THE AVOIDANCE OF DOMINATION BY ANY OUTSIDE POWERS, HE SAID. IN CONCLUSION KIFLE SAID HE WISHED TO EMPHASIZE TWO POINTS: IEG IS NOT ASKING FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE WHICH WOULD BRING IT TO PARITY WITH SOMALIA. IEG REALIZES THIS IS BEYOND USG'S AND IEG'S RESOURCES. THEREFORE US HELP WILL NOT INITIATE AN ARMS RACE, FOR SOMALIA IS SO FAR AHEAD ALREADY THAT ETHIOPIA CANNOT CATCH UP. SECOND POINT IS THAT IEG IS ASKING FOR DEFENSIVE WEAPONS ONLY.

13. FOLLOWING MEETING WITH DEP. SEC., ASST. SEC. EASUM ASKED KIFLE WHAT IEG REACTION WOULD BE IF SOMALIA MOVED INTO OGADEN AND SEIZED A PIECE OF TERRITOR. KIFLE DIFFICULTIES FOR THE IEG AND WOULD DEMORALIZE ARMED FORCES, WHICH ARE NOT NOW AWARE OF POSITION OF RELATIVE INFERIORITY THEY ARE IN. MIGHT SUCH AN EVENT UNIFY THE COUNTRY, EASUM ASKED. NO, KIFLE SAID, MILITARY WOULD BLAME GOVERNMENT AND LOOK AROUND FOR SCAPEGOATS. EASUM THEN ASKED WHAT REACTION WOULD BE ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA TO AN ACT OF SOMALI AGGRESSION. KIFLE SAID NON-ARAB COUNTRIES AT LEAST WOULD SUPPORT ETHIOPIA DIPLOMATICALLY. HOW WOULD OAU REACT, EASUM ASKED. THERE WOULD BE A STATE OF CONFUSION, KIFLE SAID, DELAYING TACTICS BY SOMALIA, WHICH WOULD BE SUPPORTED BY THE ARABS. KIFLE SAID USG RESPONSE TO IEG REQUEST FOR ARMS HAS MORAL DIMENSION, FOR IF US WON'T HELP, ETHIOPIA WILL BE DEFEATED. IEG HAS NO ALTERNATIVE, NO PLACE ELSE TO GO FOR HELP.

14. KIFLE GAVE DEP. SEC. AIDE-MEMOIRE, WHICH IS 15 PAGES LONG AND COVERS SAME POINTS HE MADE ORALLY TO DEP. SEC. AND EARLIER TO EASUM (REFTEL). AIDE-MEMOIRE, WHICH BEING POUCHED, HAS TWO ANNEXES, ONE COMPARING ETHIOPIAN AND SOMALI MILITARY EQUIPMENT INVENTORIES AND OTHER DETAILING IEG ARMS REQUEST. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 27 JUL 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE, MILITARY EQUIPMENT, MILITARY PROCUREMENT, BOUNDARY CLAIMS, CIVIL DISORDERS, BORDER INCIDENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 APR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE086716
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: AF/E:R.V.KEELEY:BJR
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D740101-0022
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740483/abbrzcsml.tel
Line Count: 273
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: STATE 82056
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28 AUG 2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <10 FEB 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMB. KIFLE'S MEETING WITH THE DEPUTY SECRETARY RE IEG MILITARY AID REQUEST
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, ET, US, SO
To: ADDIS ABABA INFO ASMARA
MOGADISCIO
NAIROBI
KHARTOUM
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

